

ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

A method and apparatus for masking a workpiece with a layer of ink from an inkjet head is disclosed. The masking prevents exposure of select regions of a photosensitive workpiece. The apparatus includes a workpiece pre-aligner for movably supporting and aligning the workpiece. The inkjet head is arranged to be in operable communication with the photosensitive layer of the workpiece when positioned on the pre-aligner and is adapted for providing a select mask of opaque ink on a photosensitive layer. Where the photosensitive layer is a negative tone photoresist, upon exposure the portion of the photosensitive layer that is not exposed because of the presence of the mask is removed upon developing. In this manner, select regions of the workpiece can be kept clear of photoresist or otherwise patterned with indicia such as alphanumeric symbols or barcodes.